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## New Offensive Weapons of U.S. and Soviet Imperil Treaty's Plan to Keep Space Free of War

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Based in The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 25—Ten years after Sputnik, space is becoming an arena for warfare.

This is the interpretation being placed here on two recent Defense Department announcements—that the Soviet Union is developing a fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS) and that the United States is developing a "space bus" that can drop off hydrogen bombs, city by city, over enemy territory.

Some officials are concerned that these announcements herald a potential escalation of strategic warfare. Others welcome what they consider a new candor in discussing an existing problem.

Much of the concern here developed from a speech by Dr. John S. Foster Jr., director of defense research and engineering, in Dallas on Dec. 13. It was then that he first applied the "space bus" nickname to the American weapon, which is a cluster of maneuverable missile warheads.

### A Limiting Definition

Technically, neither development would be called a space weapon, under the narrow definition used for the last decade, because neither circles the earth even once.

Yet the Soviet warhead flies an orbital path for most of the circuit until a braking rocket suddenly brings it down. There, it would be hairsplitting to deny that it was a spaceborne weapon.

Furthermore, Dr. Foster has made the American vehicle a space weapon by definition.

It is the first time that the two major world powers have been reported to be working on offensive space weapons. Until M. Jackson, Washington Democrat, at least as far as public opinion, break the news for it a space weapon by definition.

There is a double irony in the fact that the United States to have let the Russians get a declare, in effect, that space is developing the fractional orbital bombardment system.

ing to observers here.

### Efforts Recalled

First, it is the United States. "We, too, have some weapons that have made the greatest capabilities in space. We effort, through legislation, have not been idle. We have used public statements and action to let problems of the moment, to prevent terrestrial such as Vietnam, distract us intelligence from escalating other national security into the space train, these problems."

observers say. What is so unusual about



**TOLD OF SPACE BUS;**  
Dr. John S. Foster Jr.,  
Director of Defense Research and Engineering in  
the Defense Department.

the "space bus" announcement does, they don't have is not only that it was made after 10 years of public statements deploring aggressive designs on space, but also that it appears to redefine ballistic missiles as space weapons, in this view.

Until now both the United States and Russia have tacitly excluded intermediate-range and intercontinental-range ballistic missiles from their consideration of "space weapons."

Instead, ballistic weapons have been considered as very-long-range artillery. Even though these missiles climb higher into space than partial orbit, such as the Russian

the "space bus" Dr. Foster referred to is simply a cluster of warheads, all launched by one ballistic missile on a ballistic trajectory, but free to alter their courses in time to spread over a number of targets.

By calling this multiple warhead technique a space weapon, Dr. Foster appears to have done two things that appreciably change the public thinking on space warfare, some observers here believe.

First, he has in effect included ballistic missiles in the category of offensive space weapons for the first time. Second, by admitting what weapon experts have known all along—that only political restraint kept space from indeed being an arena of warfare—he may testing the public record bombardment have clarified the public record bombardment system. The and opened to wider public discussion the whole question of treaty now argue that that system is not affected by it because the weapon does not go into orbit and is considered

Many observers feel that the issue has been clouded in the public mind since the first Sputnik was launched on Oct. 4, 1957, by a Soviet ballistic missile.

The treaty on outer space, negotiated this year, principally March 7—six months after the by Russia and the United States test flights of the weapon began—that "it is general-only a few days in a situation is accepted that anything that such as the Cuban missile crisis is in orbit is [in] outer space," six, after which they would be clearly violate the treaty, but.

A natural follow-on to the same kind of disclaimer could what military men call "MOBS" one—that it did not violate the or multi-orbit bombardment treaty because it was not system. Such a weapon would be a space weapon.

Now, the Foster "space bus" clearly violate the treaty, but. Now, the Foster "space bus" clearly violate the treaty, but.

Multi-orbit weapons could circle only a few times before striking; be placed in space for treaty.